

SARAH A. HALTER.

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JUNE 3, 1898.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. GIBSON, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 2026.]

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 2026) granting a pension to Sarah A. Halter, has examined the same and all the evidence, and reports:

This bill, as amended, proposes to pension at \$12 per month Sarah A. Halter, as widow of R. E. Halter, who served in the Coast and Geodetic Survey and was detailed for duty in connection with the Navy, and so served under Admirals Farragut, Porter, and Lee in 1861, 1862, 1863, 1864, and 1865. He died December 10, 1896. He took part in the fighting, suffered great hardships, and was exposed to great dangers.

It appears from records and evidence filed with this committee that R. E. Halter incurred pleurisy while at work on the Mississippi River, and that he afterwards suffered from repeated attacks of it. He appears also to have suffered from bronchitis while in the service, and it is stated in an affidavit by his wife that he suffered from a cough continually from the time she married him, in 1869, until his death, and in that of his stepmother that he suffered from a cough from 1866 to 1869.

The exact cause of the soldier's death is not clearly shown.

If his death was due to causes originating while he was acting with the Navy and under the officers mentioned, and it were established, his widow would be entitled to pension under the general law and could secure such pension through the Pension Office, and that would seem to be the proper course to pursue.

The papers filed with this committee purport to be copies of original letters from Admirals Farragut, Porter, Lee, and others under and with whom Halter served during the war. If the originals were on file they would undoubtedly establish his service as of such a nature as to render the widow pensionable, and also establish the origin of the pleurisy in the service, and it seems probable that continuance of disability from pleurisy or disease of lungs could be established, but it also seems that

the place to furnish this evidence is at the Pension Office where there is a large force employed for the express purpose of looking into such matters, making the proper calls, sifting affidavits, etc.

That the widow would be pensionable if her husband's death were shown to be due to causes originating during the said service is sufficiently shown by the fact that Anna Oltmanns, widow of John C. Oltmanns, late topographical engineer of the United States Coast Survey vessel *Sachem*, is pensioned on account of her husband's death from a wound received while he was serving in a similar capacity, from which resulted disease of lungs, causing death.

Your committee, after careful consideration of the case in all its bearings, has concluded that this widow ought to have a pension of \$12 per month. At this late day evidence of some of the facts essential to make a case under strict rules can not be obtained. It can not be doubted that he died of disease contracted in the service.

The bill is reported back with the recommendation that it pass when amended as follows:

In line 6, after "R. E. Hulter," insert "and pay her a pension at the rate of twelve dollars per month."

Strike out all after "rebellion," in line 8.

Amend the title so as to read: "A bill granting a pension to Sarah A. Hulter."